IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for medical diagnostic image processing, said method comprising:

configuring a medical imaging system for remote access to medical image information from a plurality of locations, the medical image information stored within the medical imaging system; and

performing post-processing operations on the medical image information from at least one of the plurality of locations, the post-processing operations performed ~~by individuals at the plurality of locations~~ using the medical imaging system;

monitoring imaging operations of the medical imaging system; and

controlling processor time allocated for the post-processing operations based on the monitored imaging operations and adjusting an allocated processor time to access data for post-processing operations based on the monitoring such that imaging operations speed is not slowed.

2. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the post-processing operations are identified based on an area of expertise in one of a plurality of different areas of medical imaging.

3. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the remote access comprises access via a public telecommunication infrastructure.

4. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the remote access comprises access via at least one virtual private network.

5. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the medical imaging system is located at one physical location and the plurality of individuals are located at different physical locations.

6. (original) A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the medical imaging system comprises at least one medical imaging device and at least one post-processing workstation.

7. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the post-processing is performed from a location not associated with the physical location having the medical imaging device.

8. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising accessing the medical image information directly from the medical imaging system.

9. (original) A method in accordance with claim 8 wherein the medical image information is accessed in real-time.

10. (canceled)

11. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising receiving from at least one individual post-processed information.

12. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising storing the post-processed information within the medical imaging system.

13. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising allowing remote access to the medical image information only to authorized users.

14. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising limiting the operations available to individuals remotely accessing the medical image information, the limited operations being a sub-set of available operations.

15. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising limiting the operations available to individuals remotely accessing the medical image information, the limited operations being a sub-set of available operations and including at least one of controlling movement of a table of the medical imaging system, controlling movement of a gantry of the medical imaging system, controlling movement of the medical imaging system and controlling medical image scanning using the medical imaging system.

16. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising tracking at least one of (i) the operations of an individual remotely accessing the medical imaging system and (ii) a duration of time an individual remotely accesses the medical imaging system.

17. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the medical imaging system comprises a user interface configured to display medical images from the medical imaging system, and wherein the user interface is remotely accessible.

18. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising allowing remote access only after receiving a user authorization input at the medical imaging system.

19. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising blocking remote access based on a user input received at the medical imaging system.

20. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the performing of post-processing is scheduled to be completed in one of a plurality of predetermined time periods.

21. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the medical imaging system comprises a medical imaging device and a workstation and the plurality of locations are distinct from the medical imaging device and workstation.

22. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the plurality of locations are associated with an entity different than the entity having the medical imaging system.

23. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein performing post-processing operations comprises performing post-processing operations after an acquisition of the medical image information and before one of an interpretation and an evaluation of the post-processed medical image information.

24. (previously presented) A method for processing medical image information, said method comprising:

acquiring medical image information using a medical imaging system;

storing the medical image information within the medical imaging system;

accessing the medical image information stored within the medical imaging system from one of a plurality of remote locations;

generating automatically a request for post-processing upon completion of a scan by the medical imaging system;

post-processing the medical image information from one of the plurality of remote locations upon receiving the automatically generated request and when a processing utilization threshold for the medical imaging system is below a predetermined value, the medical image information post-processed using the medical imaging system; and

storing the post-processed medical image information within the medical imaging system.

25. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein the post-processing is performed based on expertise in a medical area related to the medical image information.

26. (original) A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein the accessing comprises using virtual private network to access the medical image information.

27. (original) A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein the remote locations are separate physical structures from the structure in which the medical imaging system is located.

28. (original) A method in accordance with claim 24 further comprising configuring the medical imaging system for access via an Internet based interface at each of the remote locations.

29. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 24 wherein the remote locations are associated with an entity different than the entity having the medical imaging system.

30. (previously presented) A method for medical diagnostic image processing, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of groups of individuals for performing post-processing operations on medical image information, each of the plurality of groups associated with a different post-processing service;

allowing access by the group of individuals to a medical imaging system having stored therein the medical image information, the individuals located remote from the medical imaging system and processing the medical image information using the medical imaging system from the remote location, the individuals associated with an entity different than the entity having the medical imaging system; and

storing the post-processed information within the medical imaging system.

31. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 30 wherein the post-processing services are defined by expertise in different areas of medical imaging.

32. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 30 wherein the post-processing services are not associated with the medical imaging system.

33. (previously presented) A medical imaging system comprising:

a medical imaging device for acquiring medical image information;

a plurality of communication links between the medical imaging device and a plurality of remote locations, the communication links configured for web-based communication; and

a user interface at each of the remote locations for accessing the medical image information within the medical imaging device using the plurality of communication links and

for post-processing the medical image information, the post-processing performed by individuals at the remote locations using the medical imaging device and access to the medical image information allowed only when imaging operations of the medical imaging device are complete.

34. (previously presented) A system for post-processing medical images remotely, said system comprising:

a medical imaging system configured to perform medical imaging operations;

a post-processing system configured to allow performing of post-processing operations remotely at a pre-defined time after completion of scanning operations for a day and before scanning operations on a subsequent day; and

a communication link between the medical imaging system and the post-processing system to communicate at least one request for post-processing from the medical imaging system to the post-processing system and configured to provide remote access to the medical imaging system by the post-processing system.

35. (original) A system in accordance with claim 34 further comprising a security layer.

36. (original) A system in accordance with claim 34 wherein the medical imaging system comprises at least one of (i) a medical imaging device and (ii) a workstation.

37. (original) A system in accordance with claim 34 wherein the medical imaging system comprises at least one workstation, the workstation comprising:

a user interface configured to provide co-browsing operations;

a payment and billing component configured to provide online payment operations;

a remote access component configured to control remote access to the medical imaging system;

a tracking component configured to track usage of the medical imaging system; and

a request component configured to generate a post-processing request.

38. (original) A system in accordance with claim 34 wherein the post-processing system comprises:

a post-processing unit configured to remotely access the medical imaging system to perform post-processing operations; and

a data encryption module.

39. (original) A system in accordance with claim 34 wherein the post-processing system comprises:

a remote system viewer configured to provide co-browsing operations; and

an access component configured to provide remote access to the medical imaging system.